Don’t “Hangout” with Fake Job Scammers

Release Date: September 26, 2017       Media Contact: Jerad Albracht, 608-224-5007
                                                Bill Cosh, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

MADISON – Job seekers beware: scammers may use invitations to discuss employment opportunities on Google Hangout as a way to get you to turn over sensitive personal or financial information. If you receive a similar unsolicited contact, stop communications immediately.

Fake work-from-home pitches often start via message boards and classified ad sites or through unsolicited emails from phony recruiters. Scammers use the names of well-known businesses, and the scammer may even impersonate a senior-level employee or executive from the company.

The scammer will ask the potential victim to interview over an instant messaging platform or using Google Hangouts, a service that allows Google account holders to send direct messages, join a group chat, or make voice or video calls. After an “interview,” the scammer asks for personal information under the false pretense of making a job offer or ordering a background or drug test.

If you receive an unsolicited job offer from someone claiming to represent a legitimate business, do some research and contact the business directly to inquire.

Be suspicious of job prospects that are sent to you from a personal email address (like a gmail.com address) and of requests to chat via Google Hangouts or another instant message platform.

Additional tips to protect against job interview fraud:

- Many fake job interview offers float around by text message and email, so be suspicious of any unsolicited employment-related contact that you receive. You may wish to flag the message as spam and block the account from future communications if possible.
- If you post your resume on a job site, check whether your information is public or private and adjust the security settings to meet your needs.
- Watch for “interviews” where you are immediately offered a job without consideration of your education, experiences and background.
- Remember that the person contacting you may know some details about the business they are claiming to represent.

For additional information, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at http://datcp.wisconsin.gov, send an e-mail to datcphotline@wisconsin.gov or call the Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-422-7128.

Connect with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wiconsumer or Twitter: @wiconsumer.

###